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# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



**POLICE BUSINESS 898-3315**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH EXT.590**

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**GRAFFITI REMOVAL 895-2876**  
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## **California Child Restraint Law**

Children must ride properly buckled up, in the back seat, in a safety seat or booster until they are at least 6 years old OR weight at least 60 lbs.

### **Exceptions:**

- A child under age 6 who weighs over 40 lbs. may wear a lap-only belt in the back seat if the vehicle has no shoulder belts in the back seat.
- A child under age 6 who weighs less than 60 lbs. may ride in the front seat if there is no forward-facing rear seat in the vehicle; the child restraint cannot be properly installed in a rear seat; all rear seats are occupied by other children under age 12; or for medical reasons. An infant (riding in a rear-facing child restraint or under one year or less than 20 lbs.) may not ride in front if there is an active passenger air bag.

### **Older children:**

All children under 16 years of age must ride properly buckled up in a safety belt, safety seat, or booster. Children under six years old may ride in a safety belt, properly used, if they weigh more than 60 lbs. However, safety belts do not fit most children properly until they are 8-11 years old.

Boosters fit most children from about age 4 until at least age 8. They must be used with a lap and shoulder belt. Boosters may be purchased from stores that carry other safety seats and baby furniture. Shoulder belt positioning devices are not certified or regulated to meet federal safety standards. It is illegal to sell them in California.



**Using a car safety seat correctly makes a big difference. Even the “safest” seat may not protect your child in a crash unless it is used correctly. So take a minute to check to be sure.**

### **Does your car have a passenger air bag?**

- An infant in a rear-facing seat should **NEVER** be placed in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger air bag.
- The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.
- If an older child must ride in the front seat, move the vehicle seat as far back as possible, buckle the child properly, and make sure he stays in the proper position at all times.

### **Is your child facing the right way for weight, height, and age?**

- Infants should ride facing the back of the car until they have reached at least 1 year of age **AND** weight at least 20 pounds.
- A child who weighs 20 pounds or exceeds the height limit for the car safety seat before she reaches 1 year of age should continue to ride rear-facing in a car safety seat approved for use at higher weights and heights in the rear-facing position.
- A child who weighs more than 20 pounds **AND** is older than 1 year may face forward. It is safest for a child to ride rear-facing until she reaches the top weight or height allowed by the seat for use in the rear-facing position.
- Once your child faces forward, she should remain in a car safety seat with a full harness until she reaches the top weight or height allowed by the seat. When changing the convertible seat for use in the forward-facing position, you must make adjustments. Check you car safety seat instructions.

### **Is the harness snug; does it stay on your child’s shoulders?**

- Harnesses should fit snugly against your child’s body. Check the car safety seat instructions on how to adjust the straps.
- The chest clip should be placed at armpit level to keep the harness straps on the shoulders.



### **Does the car safety seat fit correctly in your vehicle?**

- Not all car safety seats fit in all vehicles.
- When the car safety seat is installed, be sure it does not move side-to-side.
- Read the section on car safety seats in the owner's manual for your car.

### **Is the seat belt in the right place and pulled tight?**

- Route the seat belt through the correct path (check your instructions to make sure), kneel in the seat to press it down, and pull the belt tight.
- A convertible seat has 2 different belt paths, 1 for use rear-facing and 1 for forward-facing.
- Check the owner's manual for your car to see if you need to use a locking clip. Check the car safety seat instructions to see if you need a tether to keep the safety seat secure.

### **Can you use the LATCH system?**

- Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) is an anchor system that allows you to install a car safety seat without using a seat belt.
- Most new vehicles and all new car safety seats have these attachments to secure the car safety seat in the vehicle.
- Unless both the vehicle and the car safety seat have this system, seat belts are still needed to secure the car safety seat.

### **Has your child's car safety seat been in a crash?**

- If so, it may have been weakened and should not be used, even if it looks fine.
- If you must use a secondhand car safety seat, first check its full history. Do not use a car safety seat that has been in a crash, has been recalled, is too old, has any cracks in its frame, or is missing parts. Make sure it has a label from the manufacturer and instructions.
- Call the car safety seat manufacturer if you have questions about the safety of your seat.



